

PAUL'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT

HE FOUND THE BABY YEAR IN THE LIBRARY.

Paul's little visit at grandpa's was at an end, and he had to come home. The butler opened the door quietly, and looked down at him with a twinkling eye, writes Marion Dickinson, in *Youth's Companion*.

"Happy New Year, Jenkins!" and the small man skipped into the hall.

"Happy New Year, sir!" answered the big man.

Paul tugged away at his rubber boots, but was glad of Jenkins' help. "See the skates grandpa gave me!" he said, proudly displaying the shining treasure. "Where's mamma? I want to show 'em to her right away."

"Your mother says you're to go into the library and wait until nurse comes; then you can go up to see her."

"But I want to go now!" Paul objected. Nevertheless, he went obediently into the library.

Backing up to his father's easy chair, he was just about to make himself comfortable, when there came a small shriek from the hall and the rustle of garments, and somebody seized him by the coat collar.

"Gracious goodness!" nurse panted. "In another second you would have sat down! You gave me a turn, Master Paul."

"What's the matter?" asked Paul, rather indignant at this unceremonious treatment of a boy who was old enough to own skates.

Nurse laughed softly. "Turn around and look at the chair," she said. "It's another present."

A large pillow filled the seat of the great chair, and on it lay a soft roll of flannel. Paul backed away. "What is it?" he asked, sturdily.

Nurse carefully drew down a fold of the flannel, and there was a tiny pink face, with blinking blue eyes, a mouth like a round O, and no hair to speak of.

For an instant Paul stared with wide-open eyes; then, with a whoop of delight, he dashed into the hall and up the stairs.

"Mamma, mamma," he shouted, "come down quick! The little New Year's in the library!"

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

They Should Go Only Where Our Hearts Prompt the Sending.

In the *Ladies' Home Journal* Edward Bok writes in vigorous deprecation of the complicating of Christmas. "Much as we need simplicity in all the phases of our living," he contends, "its greatest need is sometimes felt at Christmas. And it seems a pity that we cannot make a beginning there. We could if we would simplify this question of presents; if we would leave out of our consideration all but the natural promptings of our hearts. If ever material considerations should be dismissed from our minds and lives it should be in connection with Christmas. If ever our friends should see our hearts—our real inner selves—it should be on Christmas day. Not that we should be other than our real selves on other days. But as it is, we are not our actual selves on the day of all days when we should be. See how we strive that our present of this year shall surpass the one we gave last year! See how instinctively we think of the material value of what we give, and actually of what we receive! See how we wrong ourselves by leaving needful things undone and inviting illness because we feel we must give something of our own making to a friend, when really a sigh goes into each stitch, instead of being frank with ourselves, and pleasing our friends infinitely more by being frank with them, and purchasing something at far less cost to our health. Every woman knows what I mean by this; the great evil of 'making things' for Christmas presents when really neither the time nor the strength can be spared. In much the same way we complicate Christmas at the table."

A Month of Celebration.

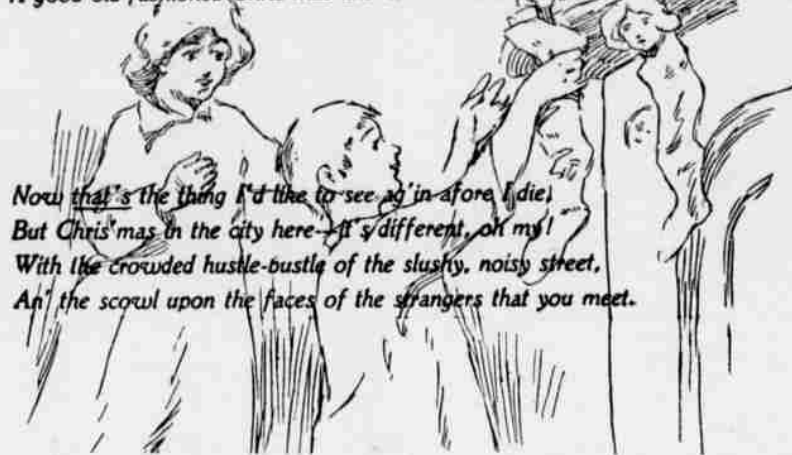
Perhaps no nation or religion enjoys New Year's day more than the Chinese. They celebrate their feast in the early part of February, and the festivities last a month. Beating of drums and firing of crackers, with decoration of bunting and flags, usher in this day, when the people visit their joss houses, worship their gods, and with oriental ceremony shake hands with "A Happy New Year." In preparation for this event a Chinaman tries to square his accounts with all the world, and a Chinaman who owes debts at the beginning of the New Year forfeits his right to be called a gentleman.

Christmas Noise.

Who buys for boys this hint may take:
The frailest drum will soonest break.
—Chicago Record.



*A good old-fashioned Chris'mas, with the logs upon the hearth,
The table filled with feasters, an' the room a-roar 'ith murth,
With the stockin's crammed to bustin' an' the medders piled 'ith snow—
A good old-fashioned Chris'mas like we had so long ago!*



*Now that's the thing I'd like to see ag'in afore I die,
But Chris'mas in the city here—'t's different, oh my!
With the crowded hustle-bustle of the slushy, noisy street,
An' the scowl upon the faces of the strangers that you meet.*

*Oh, there's buyin', plenty of it, of a lot o' gorgeous toys,
An' it takes a mint o' money to please modern girls and boys.
Why, I mind the time a jack-knife an' a toffy-lump for me
Made my little heart an' stockin' ju' chock-full of Chris'mas glee*



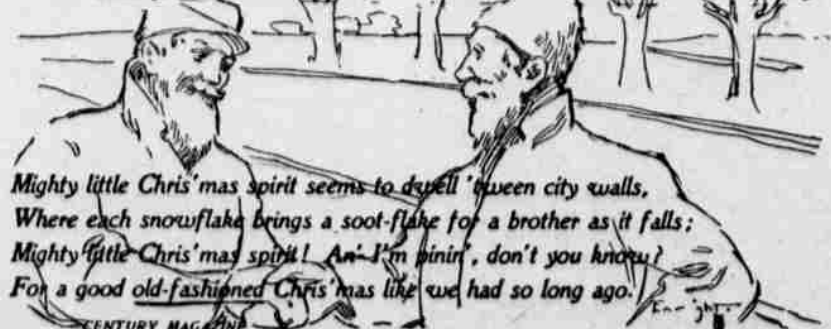
*An' there's feasin'—Think o' feedin' with these stuck-up city folk!
Why, ye have to speak in whispers, an' ye dar'n't crack a joke.
Then remember how the tables looked all crowded with your kin,
When you couldn't hear a whistle blow across the merry din!*

*You see I'm so old-fashioned-like I don't care much for style,
An' to eat your Chris'mas banquets here I wouldn't go a mile!
I'd rather have, like Solomon, a good yarb-dinner set
With real old friends than turkle soup with all the nob's you'd get.*



*There's my next-door neighbor Gurley—fancy how his brocus 'u'd lift
If I'd holler 'Merry Chris'mas! Caught, old fellow, Chris'mas gift!
Lordy-Lord, I'd like to try it! Guess he'd nearly have a fit
Hang this city stiffness, anyways, I can't get used to it.*

*Then your heart it kept a-swellin' till it nearly bu'st your side,
An' by night your jaws were achin' with your smile four inches wide,
An' your enemy, the two'st one, you'd just grab his hand, an' say:
"Mebbe both of us was wrong, John. Come, let's shake. It's Chris'mas day!"*



*Mighty little Chris'mas spirit seems to dwell 'tween city walls,
Where each snowflake brings a soot-flake for a brother as it falls;
Mighty little Chris'mas spirit! An' I'm pinin', don't you know?
For a good old-fashioned Chris'mas like we had so long ago.*

AN AMATEUR SANTA CLAUS

HIS LOT WAS NOT AN ENVIABLE ONE BY ANY MEANS.

The man who had been selected to be the Santa Claus sat out on the top of the roof in the cold, cold night and looked up at the twinkling stars.

"I've got a nice job, I don't think," growled Santa Claus. "I think when it comes to being a nice, obliging young man I am certainly the easiest ever. The next time I go to a Christmas house party, why, I won't. O, yes. We just have to have a Santa Claus, Mr. Everts, to slide down the great, wide chimney in the back hall. There is a ladder fixed there, and you can come down easy. The other men just won't do it, and I hate to ask you, but you are so obliging."

"O, I'm obliging all right. I'm a real sweet thing, and I'm just tickled to death to sit up here like a north pole explorer on the warm side of an iceberg. All nice and warm down-stairs and that idiot Fleming is dancing all over the shop with Miss Roberts. The other fellows are sitting on dark stairs and making goo-goo eyes, and I'm on top of the house playing Santa Claus."

"O, this is just too lovely for any use. I just dote on this game. But if anybody ever comes up sudden like in the night and asks me if it's nice to be a Santa Claus, I'll tell them that when it comes to good things being Santa Claus is certainly the butt end."

"I wonder how many years I have to roost up here on this perch anyhow. I was to sit near the chimney so that I could hear that gang of trundle-bed trash howl that song about 'Welcome, welcome, dear old Santa Claus.' Well, not a sound do I hear."

"I believe this is one of those snipe hunting propositions. They get me up here and then skip. Wonder they don't set fire to the house to make it more pleasant for your nice old uncle Santa. Wish they would. It'd be warmer."

A voice from the trap door in the roof: "Mr. Everts, Mr. Everts, we've been waiting a half hour and the children have sung until they're hoarse. Why, Mr. Everts, you're at the wrong chimney."—Chicago Daily Tribune.

A PLACE FOR SANTA CLAUS.

The Story of the Old Saint should Be Told in Merry Mood.

With the approach of Christmas arises the problem discussed by modern mothers and child-students in regard to the fiction of Santa Claus. Is it wrong to deceive a child, and will he not lose faith in the parent when he finds out that Santa Claus does not exist? The best advice we have ever seen on the subject was an editorial printed in that excellent magazine for mothers as well as teachers, the *Kindergarten Review*. The editor defends Santa Claus. The trouble, where there is any, arises, she says, from efforts to give the old story a realistic setting and to reply to questions with too ingenious fibs. "We put too little fun and fantasy into our telling of the Christmas tale," she writes; and again: "Told as such tales ought to be told—in a merry mood, with laughing mien and wonder tone, with funny winks and shrugs as parryings of difficult questions—the tale is harmless enough." When the child discovers that Santa Claus is not real, he need not feel a shock any more than when he suspects that there are no fairies or goblins. But the parents who raise this difficulty are usually those who disapprove of fairy stories. We are glad that we have such authority for retaining the "Santa Claus myth," for old and young enjoy the merry "make-believe." And when the child outgrows it we can afford to let it go. One Christmas story more wonderful and supernatural he can never outgrow—that of the Babe and the Star and the Angels.—Congregationalist.

A Good New Year's Resolution.

I have never been much of a hand at making resolutions; still less at keeping them; but if I were to throw some of my ideals into that form for a New Year's gift to my friends, I suppose it would run something like this: Resolved, To live in the active voice, intent on what I can do, rather than what happens to me in consequence; in the indicative mood, concerned with what is, rather than what might be more to my liking; in the present tense, with concentration on immediate duty, rather than regret for the past or anxiety for the future; in the first person, criticising myself, rather than condemning others; in the singular number, obeying my own conscience, rather than the demands of the many.—William De Witt Hyde, in Boston Congregationalist.